Proposal for deep sea sand mining from Kerala

1475. SHRI N.K. PREMACHANDRAN: Will the Minister of MINES be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have received any proposal for deep sea sand mining from the coast of Kerala for sanction;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the action taken in the matter;

(c) whether Government are aware that the State Government of Kerala signed agreements with some private firms for deep sea sand mining in the global investors meet;

(d) whether any relevant legislation exists in deep sea; and

(e) if so, the details thereof and if not, whether Government propose to introduce any legislation in the matter?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISRY OF MINES (SHRI RAMESH BAIS): (a) and (b) Granting of Mineral concessions for minerals (including sand) in the coastal sea beds is in the domain of the Central Government under the Offshore Areas Mineral (Development and Regulation) Act, 2002. Under the provisions of this Act, the Central Government is required to notify the areas for which mineral concessions shall be granted and any application filed before such notification is premature. The State Governments are denuded of any powers to grant concessions for mining of minerals (including sand) in the coastal sea-beds. So far no proposal has been received for deep sea sand mining from anybody including State Government of Kerala.

(c) The State Government of Kerala has informed that a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)has been signed between Kerala State Industrial Development Corporation (A State Government Undertaking) and Crown Maritime Company (I) Limited for getting an Environmental Impact Study for sea sand mining activity by agencies like Geological Survey of India and National Institute of Oceanography.

(d) and (e) Yes, Sir. The Government have recently notified "The Offshore Areas Mineral (Development and Regulation) Act, 2002" on 31.1.2003. This is an Act to provide for development and regulation of mineral resources in the territorial waters, continental shelf, exclusive economic zone and other maritime zones of India and to provide for matters connected or incidental thereto.